

# What about Being Red? Encounters with the Color of Jung's *Red Book*

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“The spirit of the depths opened my eyes and I caught a glimpse of the inner things, the world of my soul, the many-formed and changing.”

—C. G. Jung, *The Red Book*, 2009, p. 237

The color *red* is central to our first perceptions of Jung's *Red Book*. In this article, I discuss *red* as a particular image with strong emotional energies related to birth and rebirth, to life and death, and in particular to the liminality between these states of being. As an embodied psychological perception, the red cover and title of *The Red Book* provide a unique portal into our engagement with Jung's inner journey. I link the archetypal significance of red to Jung's own references to the color and to another red book that influenced him. I also share the recent production experiences of *The Red Book's* art director, Larry Vigon, and of Jungian psychotherapist, Sandra Vigon, as examples of these archetypal themes.

Jung's attention to the psychological significance of details was central to the way he amplified symbols and images from the archetypal forces of the psyche. On both conscious and unconscious levels, he focused on obscurities otherwise overlooked. Although the appearance of the folio he selected could have been incidental to him, it is more likely that Jung's particular choice reflects his attunement to various details related to the nature of the book's content and its meaning to him. In the epilogue he penned in 1959, decades after he stopped working with the material itself, he equated the cost of his selection with the emotional value he placed on the experiences recorded within it: “I always knew that these experiences contained something precious, and therefore I knew of nothing better than to write them



down in a ‘precious,’ that is to say, costly book and to paint the images that emerged through reliving it all—as well as I could” (Jung, *The Red Book*, 2009, p. 360).

Our first impression of Jung’s intricate process is greatly impacted by one particular detail even more prominent than cost, a quality that has become inseparable from the book. Then as well as now, the color *red* is central to its appearance and to its simple title. We hear and see the *red*, taking it in when holding its weight in our hands, and ultimately, when reading and processing the depths of its contents. Could the intensity of *red*—and our most immediate associations with emotional passion, blood, and fire—facilitate an engagement with Jung’s work in a particularly evocative way?

The shiny red dust jacket catches the light of the newly published facsimile in contrast to the plain cardboard packaging in which the book is initially wrapped. The book, oversized and heavy, cannot be held casually in the lap and seems to need its own table, or at least a clear surface to support it. Leafing through the volume for the first time, I am immediately drawn into Jung’s rich, multicolored paintings placed among the gothic calligraphy of his text. The *red* in the lettering and paintings consistently catches my eye, a strong, although in no way singular, presence

within the pages. Reading a few passages of the translation initially feels so overwhelming that I can hardly take it in. I close the pages and return my attention to the *red* cover and the *red* title that hold it all together. This is *The Red Book*.

And *red* it is, an evocative container for Jung’s most detailed work with the unconscious psyche. I am not surprised that Jung commissioned costly leather binding in this particular color for his work. A focus of my doctoral

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research, the primordial dimensions of *red* are frequently reactivated within my own dreams.<sup>1</sup> These reverberations remind me that the force of *red*, as an archetypal energy, commands a particular attention, as it often represents a threshold between extreme emotions or between different realms. From these perspectives, it is the only color appropriate for a work this groundbreaking and potentially controversial.

Was Jung's choice of color a significant detail in his conscious awareness? Or does it indicate a strong, although less conscious, resonance with the archetypal dimensions of the color that constellated through his work? Either way, this red portal leads us into his creation, where his personal consciousness interacted directly with unconscious forces.

The dimensions contained within *The Red Book* may be limitless. Without a doubt, there will be much written about the nature of its content for years to come. For now, however, as we are just beginning to interact with this monumental work, I want to call attention to the *interactive* significance of its color and title. Precisely because we often do not consciously notice the effect of color beyond culturally bound associations and meanings, I suggest we let our attention linger on this *red*, becoming more aware of the particularity of its archetypal nature. Such attunement to the primordial and universal aspects of the color can help us begin to apprehend the relevance of this *red-ness* of the outer cover and the title to the nature of the work inside.

The everyday visual perception of any color can be understood as an embodied psychological experience. It is simultaneously physical and emotional. As we take waves of light into the body through the retina, we automatically move into subjective emotional experience. The multiple dimensions of this vibrant process call us to consider color as more than a fixed quality. Philosopher Merleau-Ponty (1945/1958) wrote about color as "living perception . . . a way into the thing" (p. 355). Thought of in this way, *red* carries us into the nucleus of Jung's work to engage with the seeds of ideas and theories he developed throughout his life.

## RED TODAY

Jung's *Red Book*, written in the early 1900s, now enters a 21st-century world, where the color is frequently associated with emotional intensity in a variety of cultures. *Red* images can portray passion, sexuality, anger, death, violence, or revolution. The color is also used in representations of birth and rebirth. Similar to the use of *red* found in records of early ritual, myth, and alchemy, a threshold between reality and fantasy or between sleeping and dreaming is often depicted as a red image in contemporary film, theater, and other

art forms. Such thresholds can indicate a portal in between the literal or symbolic realms of life and death.

Across cultures, this in-between or liminal state of being, psychologically heralding a new state of emotional consciousness via the use of the color *red*, seems to me particularly relevant to *The Red Book's* color. For Jung, the process of creating the book itself occurred in a similar kind of in-between space, situated in-between conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche. The "shuttling to and fro" to which he later referred in his seminal essay "The Transcendent Function" (Jung, 1954) describes a process that occurs within a liminal state of being, where one goes back and forth between the old and the new, both symbolically and literally.

This back and forth process also occurred for Jung as he immersed himself regularly in the intensity of his dialogues with unconscious figures and yet continued to work and interact with his patients and family. Understanding that exploration of the depths of the unconscious was not without serious risk, he expressed fear for his sanity and for his ability to return to everyday reality. To bridge these different realms more constructively, Jung developed what is known today as active imagination, a process of intentionally engaging in dialogue with the unconscious while in a state of consciousness. As a container for this seminal aspect of Jung's work, the particular nature of the red binding expresses the liminality and emotional depth of his journey. It colors a portal for our journey as well.

## RITUAL RED

Ritual provides a unique yet related context for an attunement to red, where its deep hues are often linked to deep emotion. In diverse cultures throughout the world, red has historically been a part of rituals related to death and burials. Its emphatic and non-accidental presence at prehistoric burial sites from 92,000 B.C.E. suggests to some archeologists that red actually could be one of the earliest indications of symbolic thought in humans (Hovers, Ilani, Bar-Yosef, & Vandermeersch, 2003). The color has also been observed as a ritual symbol that connects the living to the dead (Gimbutas, 1999).<sup>2</sup> Linking the complex and multidimensional polarities of life and death, *red* similarly holds Jung's engagement between consciousness and the unconscious.

Such a link itself can be viewed as a significant image situated within Jung's (1952/1969) conception of the psyche, as articulated in his essay "On the Nature of the Psyche." In the way that the nature of ritual experience enables the expression and containment of intense emotion that is enacted physically, *red* as a symbol experientially connects emotions and physicality. Jung distinguished the physical world of matter from the nonmaterial realm of the unconscious, yet he explained a psychophysical continuum of interplay between the two. Emphasizing this interplay as compensatory, Jung

compared the process to the color spectrum of light. Placing *red*, which he equated with blood, emotion, and instinct, at one end, and *blue*, which he related to spirit, at the opposite end, Jung explained these poles of the physical world of matter and the nonmaterial realm of the unconscious relating to each other through the concept of the archetype (p. 211).

In a similar way, the dynamic between the physical and symbolic attributes of color strongly lends itself to Jung's (1952/1969) description of the psychoid archetype, which he viewed as unifying both consciousness and the unconscious. Situating the psychoid archetype simultaneously "within

the stuff of the organism" (consciousness or matter) *and* in the psychic realm (the unconscious or spirit), the archetype unites these distinct aspects of the psyche, he concluded, as it "*forms the bridge to matter* in general. In archetypal conceptions and instinctual perceptions, spirit and matter confront one another...in the psychic realm as distinctive qualities of conscious contents" (pp. 215–216, italics added). If colors are considered as archetypal aspects within this unitary psyche, then *red*, in particular, with its ritual associations as a threshold between life and

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death, may be an element of connection between the unconscious realm and our world of matter.

## ALCHEMICAL RED

Within the obscure processes of the Eastern and Western alchemy that Jung studied, he found symbols and metaphors that he believed were related not only to physical processes, but also to inner experience. In these complex and varied alchemical systems, he noted that changes of color were carefully observed stages of transformation in a physical substance, and that these transitions could also be related to spiritual or psychological transformations.

In the alchemical system of color symbolism, the primary stages of transformation were most frequently represented by the colors black, white, and red.<sup>3</sup>

*Red* is a particularly notable, even prominent, color within the alchemical process. Reddening, or the state of becoming red, is significant in a number of alchemical images and processes throughout the work of physically and symbolically transforming base substances into gold. The alchemical gold itself, the philosopher's stone, was often referred to as the *red* stone, the *red* elixir, or the *red* tincture. Jung (1967) equated the red liquid tincture of the philosopher's stone with Mercurius, an image that he explored in great detail and considered a living quality, a life principle linking spirit and matter (pp. 212–213).

Red sulphur, often described as a burning rock, was considered an active, corrosive substance and was thought to add emotional intensity, often through its association with instinctive parts of the psyche related to sex, ambition, power (von Franz, 1980), as well as evil and violence (Bleakley, 1998). The alchemical stage known as *rubedo* was associated with the ultimate image of unification, the *coniunctio*. Jung (1946/1966) wrote that it was at this point in the work that the person of the alchemist and the unconscious of the alchemist were thought to dissolve together into a new level of unity, or conjunction. When viewed in this framework, *rubedo* leads into Jung's creative process of joining outer and inner experience. As a new work, his *Liber Novus*<sup>4</sup> represents a *coniunctio* of his consciousness uniting with images of the unconscious. As such, the *coniunctio* within *Liber Novus* is heralded by the *rubedo* of *The Red Book*.

Alchemical images, as signs of change and transformation, formed an important part of Jung's experience during the many years he referred to his leather folio as *The Red Book*. His active work with the contents, as well as his selection of the leather folio, predates his study of alchemy, yet the *red* foreshadows his subsequent knowledge as an early unconscious and symbolic attunement to the archetypal aspects of alchemical images that later more specifically held such resonance for him.

Jung (2009) explained his progression from working with *The Red Book* to his study of alchemy as if this outcome was inevitable: "There [in alchemy] the contents of this book found their way into actuality and I could no longer continue working on it" (p. 360). This image of *The Red Book* preceding and, more importantly, enabling an actualization of its contents can be compared to a pregnancy. An image of birth also appears in Jung's transfer of his original dreams from small black notebooks into the large red folio, developing the material further in the process. What began in black was birthed in red—both as Jung's original red leather folio and now as the red facsimile.

Even the formal title, presented today as the book's subtitle, *Liber Novus* (New Book), is itself a direct reference to the new and therefore to birth. In relation to alchemical stages, the original black notebooks can be considered the initial containers of Jung's undigested *prima materia*, reflecting the chaotically dark phase to which the alchemists referred as the *nigredo*. The book that is *red*, then, provides a container of the *coniunctio*, a point of synthesis anticipated by the appearance of the *rubedo*. These alchemical associations of *red* with union, pregnancy, and birth reverberate with the color's ritual associations to death, birth, and new life.

## RED FOR JUNG

During the time Jung developed *The Red Book* material, he described being influenced by the novels of Gustav Meyrink. Jung regarded him as a visionary artist and noted similar symbolism in his own visions and in Meyrink's novel, *The White Dominican* (1921/1994). In the novel, an elder describes a red book to the hero, who reveals mysteries related to transcending death. In particular, the elder related, cinnabar-red is the color of the book because of an ancient Chinese belief that it is "the color of the garments of those who have reached the highest stage of perfection and stayed behind on earth for the salvation of mankind" (Meyrink, as quoted by Shamdasani in Jung, 2009, p. 212, fn 180). Analyst Cary de Angulo (later Cary Baynes), who transcribed Jung's first draft of *The Red Book* material in 1924 and 1925, recalled Jung's concern at the time that the form for his own red book necessarily utilized a more scientific and philosophical method in contrast to Meyrink's fictional form. Jung's awareness of the symbolic aspects of the red color of this book describing life and death mysteries, as well as his admiration for Meyrink as a visionary who experimented in alchemy, would have influenced his decision to select *red* as the color of his leather binder to contain his own precious encounters with the unconscious.

Several red objects are mentioned by Jung (1963) in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* as central to his encounter with the unconscious. However aware or unaware he was of any symbolic value of the color itself, he consistently noted particular colors in his descriptions of incidents forming his most memorable inner experiences.

In his earliest dream recalled from childhood, Jung (1963) described entering a room with a red carpet running from the entrance to a low platform with a "rich golden throne" and "perhaps a red cushion" holding something huge, a mysterious and yet numinous object that Jung later recognized as a ritual phallus (p. 12). Significantly, the red carpet led from the door to the central focus of the dream. This transitional position of the red carpet



connects a state of consciousness left behind the door into an encounter with the phallic image of the unconscious.

The chapter entitled “Confrontation with the Unconscious” (Jung, 1963) mentions *red* as a significant detail of a stone. Jung described his activity of gathering and building structures with stones as a daily response to his emotional state of disorientation. He wrote that one day as he walked along the lake “picking stones out of

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the gravel on the shore . . . suddenly I caught sight of a red stone,” a small four-sided pyramid-shaped rock fragment. Jung immediately knew that this red stone was the altar to place under the dome of his church in his stone village. As he did so, he recalled the underground phallus of his childhood dream, connecting the two events together through his associations (p. 174). *Red* provided a particularly liminal quality for his altar, itself a powerful symbol within the rituals of religion that link earth and heaven. With his association, the red image also helped Jung move from an emotional state of disorientation into a state of insight.

A third powerful red image in Jung’s life (1963) appears in the description of his 1913 vision, which he later interpreted as a premonition of the outbreak of the First World War. It was a visual image of the European continent flooded by “mighty yellow waves, the floating rubble of civilization, and the drowned bodies of uncounted thousands,” with the whole sea then turning to blood (p. 175). The image recurred with the blood emphasized even more vividly, he wrote. These images were at first interpreted by Jung as meaning that he was menaced by a psychosis. After the war broke out in 1914, however, he considered these visions a prediction of actual events, and the urgency of his task to engage with the unconscious through these visions and dreams became more clear to him. He wrote that the work of “writing down the fantasies which had come to me during my building game . . . took precedence over everything else” (p. 176). It was at this point that Jung immersed himself in his dialogues with figures in the unconscious. Driven by the intensity and urgency of the red blood, he created a bridge between consciousness and the unconscious in *The Red Book*.

## RED IN THE PRESENT-DAY MAKING OF *THE RED BOOK*: A VERY RED BOOK

Art director Larry Vigon and Jungian psychotherapist Sandra Vigon were closely involved in the concrete process that brought *The Red Book* into publication on October 7, 2009. Their experiences during the production process provide a glimpse into an experiential encounter with what could be considered the energy of the book itself. When I spoke with them during the week of the book's release, I asked about themes that were prominent for them personally during the production. Each described it as a very *red* book, both literally in appearance and, unexpectedly, in the way it reverberated emotionally in their lives.

The momentum of their engagement with the book began for the couple sometime in 2006 when they were living in Los Angeles. Sandra was in private practice as a depth psychotherapist and Larry's book, *Dream: A Journal* (Vigon, 2006), had just been published. This work, a compilation of his dreams presented in text and paintings, had been painstakingly recorded in his own large black folios during the time of his analytic work with Jungian analyst J. Marvin Spiegelman. Although Larry had worked professionally as an international award-winning graphic designer for many years, his original intention in developing the work was, like Jung's intention with *The Red Book*, deeply personal rather than commercial. Larry described his seventeen-year process as having a level of obsession, "writing down every single dream I could remember." Also similar to Jung's lengthy process with *The Red Book* material, the final product eventually published in his book reflected a process of personal engagement with images from the unconscious. Shamdasani (in Jung, 2009) acknowledged these similarities to Jung's long involvement with *The Red Book's* material when he called Larry's book, *Dream*, a "modern-day *Liber Novus*" (p. xi).

Because of the personal and emotional nature of the material, the publication of Larry's journal was, for the couple, an important event. In particular, it had been difficult to obtain a commitment from a publisher who would hold true to the artistic integrity of the original journals without cutting corners to save costs. The final product, published by Jim Mairs at W. W. Norton, enabled readers to experience the facsimile of Larry's work as an extremely close replication of the original.

Sandra shared their enthusiasm about the publisher during lunch with Los Angeles analyst Nancy Furlotti, now on the board of the Philemon Foundation, who knew that Sonu Shamdasani had similar concerns about finding a publisher for *The Red Book* who would respect the need to remain as close as possible to the original. Their conversation led to an introductory meeting between Larry Vigon and Sonu Shamdasani, a connection that ultimately led

to Larry's engagement as art director for *The Red Book* and to W. W. Norton as its publisher. This connection provided a union of sorts between scholar, artist, and publisher that enabled a key element necessary for detailed negotiations with the Jung heirs about the possibility of actual publication.

Everyone involved was firmly committed that a newly printed book for contemporary readers remain true to Jung's intention, Larry related. Like many creative endeavors that strive to address multiple concerns, the actualization of this commitment was discussed in great detail from each participant's perspective—scholarship, artistic design, and marketing. Despite this highly respectful and fruitful collaborative process, unexpected production troubles developed that made it what Sandra called "a difficult birth." At the culminating point of publication, both elation and disappointment were present.

Larry's first direct contact with Jung's book occurred in Zurich in the fall of 2007 during the week of digital scanning. He recalled his first impression of the original when it arrived in the studio from the bank vault in Switzerland where the Jung family had stored it since 1983 (Hoerni preface in Jung, 2009). The large book was lifted out of a black box and unwrapped from black cloth. There it was, he said, "a *red* leather brick. It was so *red*."

Even with the intensity of the red leather, differences of opinion were expressed about the details of the cover and jacket design, which Larry originally conceived as "*red on red*," or red letters on a solid red background to emphasize the redness of the title. The publisher insisted that gold letters would be necessary for greater visibility of the title in promotional photographs. Larry felt the *red* itself would speak more powerfully to the nature of the book, similar to the way that the famous all-white embossed cover of the Beatles (1969) *White Album* conveyed the power of their songs with its high impact, yet starkly simple white image. The final decision for the title to be in gold letters on an all-red cover was a disappointing but probably necessary compromise in professional collaboration, Larry related. Other essential details of the book's design, such as reproducing the actual size of the original, were honored without question. "The final version is beautiful," Larry said, "and Norton did a great job publishing the book."

Taking time to digest the visual as well as tactile details, Larry described his intimate contact with the book, "touching each page that Jung touched." He found the book full of color, including actual gold paint that, unfortunately, could not be reproduced with the standard four-color printing process used. As he carefully explored Jung's design, he noticed tiny raised pinholes on each page and discovered a grid that Jung had developed for precisely reproducing the alignment of each page layout by pushing a pin through each corner to the next page. To deepen the experiential reality for readers, the pencil markings of Jung's grid, as well as each mark, ink, or

coffee drop, as they appeared in the original, were left on the pages of the facsimile.

"I imagine Jung had a lot of feeling in this process. You can tell he was very passionate about it, the amount of detail is incredible. It's not about judging the individual paintings," Larry said, "it's the feeling of the book as a whole." Larry also described a moment when he simply had to take off the protective white gloves always worn when the book was handled. "I just needed to touch it with my bare hands to get the actual skin on paper feeling, not just through the white glove." Taking the gloves off violated a boundary, but it was important, he said, to feel it that way.

After such painstaking work with so many details, however, Larry was shocked to learn that the first 5,000 copies of *The Red Book* contained a mistake by the publisher in the credits for the book design and composition, as well as for the jacket cover design. It was initially devastating to read the jacket credit that omitted his name and listed only the firm that, as art director, he had hired and collaborated with. Compounding that omission, a credit for Digital Fusion, the Los Angeles firm that had provided the ultimate state-of-the-art scanning equipment, was omitted. "It was all an error by the publisher that will be corrected in later editions, but it's wrong in the first 5,000 copies. Those copies will be seen by so many people. I was so angry I couldn't sleep for two nights," he told me. "Talk about seeing *red!*"<sup>5</sup>

Whereas Larry's involvement was ongoing, Sandra's most direct involvement was primarily during the single week when the couple traveled to Zurich for the scanning process of the original book. Sandra originally anticipated being there that week simply to support Larry and the production group. Since there was much excitement among the assembled group, which included Herr Ulrich Hoerni, Jung's grandson and member of the Society of Heirs of C. G. Jung, she was drawn into the studio itself, where she was able to see Jung's original red folio when it was lifted ceremoniously out of a black wooden box, unwrapped from its black cloth, and then carefully placed on the scanner stand.

A large scanner, representing the latest technology of its kind, had been shipped from Los Angeles and a stand had been constructed to hold the pages of the book at 45-degree angles rather than flattening and wearing down its spine during the process. Unexpectedly, the bright lights of the equipment caused the pages to curl up, so a plan was developed for Larry to hold the corners of the pages flat in order to safely scan the entire book. Fairly early on, however, it became clear that this painstaking process involved great concentration and stamina, more than one person could reasonably undertake alone for so many pages. So shifts were arranged with different members of the group, each wearing white gloves to protect the pages. The process took the greater part of the week. Sandra, relating it to

being present at a birth, felt a profound sense of “the literal coming into the world of *The Red Book*.”

In Zurich that week on the third day of the scanning, Sandra traveled to the outskirts of Zurich to visit Sonja Marjasch, a greatly admired analyst with whom she had studied, who was then quite ill with cancer. Sandra described sitting with the elderly woman for about an hour, “watching her cross back and forth, in and out of consciousness, over to the other side,” yet coming back to hear her excitement about *The Red Book*: “Her eyes would light up, she’d smile, she’d beam, she was so full—she was a passionate woman, a very *red*-blooded woman.” Sandra told her *The Red Book* was like a jewel box. “Even though I don’t think *The Red Book* itself held any particular significance for her, she was ignited by my passion and excitement as I related my experience. As I sat holding her hand, telling my story, I could see the life force brighten in her eyes, ebbing and flowing as if moving between two worlds.”

Sandra then returned to the studio in Zurich. The next day, just before she started her shift of holding down the pages for the scanning, she phoned to see how Sonja was doing and was told that she had passed away early that morning. Recognizing that she was in the midst of not just one but two profound experiences, Sandra chose to honor her teacher through continuing and intensifying her direct contact with the actual book:

So what I did was spend the whole day, seven hours, with my hands on *The Red Book*. It felt like the thread of her life was over, and I felt her passion and Jung’s passion and their courage. That’s what this book is about, it’s a tremendous exploration and journey into the depths, with unbelievable courage. The thread of Sonja’s life was gone and yet at the same moment *The Red Book* was coming out into the world. What a gift to be able to meditate on these opposites with my hands on this book.

These tremendously powerful and emotional experiences coming together at once, Sandra said, emphasized for her a death and rebirth theme:

The thread of Sonja’s life was gone. . . . but here’s this book that’s about to be born into the world, it’s coming out of this dark box in the bank, for whatever: good, bad, or indifferent, it was very . . . well, *numinous* is the word, and very personal. Obviously, everyone there has their own personal experience with this amazing event.

Larry and Sandra Vigon's experiences resonate deeply with the archetypal energies of *red* that I have encountered. Unanticipated emotional passion, conflict, and anger for Larry, the numinosity of symbolic birth and literal death of a loved one for Sandra—these experiences hold the generative and destructive energies so universally related to *red*.<sup>6</sup>

## CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

Although the focus of this article is primarily on the way we first begin to experience the book through its red cover, there is much red within the book to explore as well. Turning the pages of my treasured copy, I encounter vibrant *red* imbued throughout the paintings and text. My attention is immediately drawn to the opening part of the second section, "The Red One." It begins with "The Wandering," wherein Jung describes a transitional time after emerging from the depths, not knowing how to proceed, waiting, and then reaching a solid point: "The door of the Mysterium has closed behind me. I feel that my will is paralyzed and that the spirit of the depths possesses me. I know nothing about a way. I wait, without knowing what I'm waiting for. But already in the following night I felt that I had reached a solid point" (p. 259).

In the active imagination that follows, Jung encounters the red horseman, an image he fears will turn out to be the devil (p. 259). I skip ahead, wanting to take it all in and yet knowing that much more time is needed to absorb the depth of Jung's work. "I awaken, the day reddens the East" (p. 270). "The reddish color of the stones is wonderful; they reflect the glow of a hundred thousand past suns—these small grains of sand have rolled in fabulous primordial oceans, over them swam primordial monsters with forms never beheld before" (p. 271). Even in an initial glimpse, *red* is a powerful presence within the book, as well as through its cover.

For me, the essence of *red* incorporates the mysteries within Jung's work. As living perception, this color represents the potential for multidimensional experience. Engaging with it through *The Red Book* or working with dreams and synchronicities as my own dialogue with the unconscious has deepened my understanding of psyche and matter as different aspects of a unified realm.

Sonu Shamdasani wrote that Jung's epilogue, which ends abruptly mid-sentence, indicated that he meant for *The Red Book* to stand on its own "as one strand of discourse within his whole effort" (in Jung, 2009, p. 224). "It is," he wrote, "an unfinished manuscript corpus, and it is not completely clear how Jung intended to complete it, or how he would have published it, had he decided to do so" (p. 225). Perhaps this ambiguity is an apt quality that reflects the nature of its red cover as well as its contents. *Red* ambiguity offers multiple possibilities, multiple dimensions. It is with Jung's same

intention that I invite dialogue about the *red* as the color of Jung's *Red Book*. As one strand of discourse and as one way to further bring our own imaginal encounters into life, the evocative *red* threshold bridges consciousness and the unconscious, all within the creative matrix of the psyche.

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## NOTES

1. This essay integrates many of the ideas originally explored and presented in my doctoral dissertation (Hale, 2006).
2. Archeomythologist Marija Gimbutas (1999) found that the color red, both as ochre and limestone, was associated with birth rituals during the Upper Paleolithic through Neolithic periods. Many buried items, Gimbutas recorded, indicate a symbolic view linking life with death.
3. These three colors—black, white, and red—are found to be represented in almost all languages in a seminal, although now controversial, study by linguists Berlin and Kay (1969).
4. Editor and translator Sonu Shamdasani (in Jung, 2009) concluded that *Liber Novus* was the actual title of the work Jung and others more commonly referred to as *The Red Book* (p. 193). The Latin translation, *New Book*, provides a significant descriptor, and apt title, of the work. It remains notable, however, that *The Red Book* is the title not only used more, but remembered more. This may be due to both the particularity and the power of *red* as a color of archetypal magnitude.
5. Subsequent printings list the corrected credit: Art direction—Larry Vigon; Design and Composition—Larry Vigon and Eric Baker Design Associates. Scanning by Digital Fusion. The incorrect jacket design credit has been removed, and there is no separate credit for jacket or cover design.
6. Sandra noticed that the London Eye Ferris wheel, visible from their flat, was lit entirely in red during our interviews. Although the color varies nightly, this was the first time during the 10 months they had lived in the city that they had seen it lit in this color. This kind of *red* synchronicity is often present when I am working with the color.

## FURTHER READING

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